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SOVIET UNION - EASTERN EUROPE

This publication is prepared for regional specialists in the Washington community by the USSR - Eastern Europe Division, Office of Current Intelligence, with occasional contributions from other offices within the Directorate of Intelligence. Comments and queries are welcome. They should be directed to the authors of the individual articles.

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Soviets on Portuguese Election Results

The Soviets have tried to put a good face on the outcome of the Portuguese election, asserting that the voting took place peacefully, fascism was repudiated, and the policies of the provisional government were endorsed. But their media coverage has also been unusually explicit about the lackluster showing of the Portuguese Communists.

The election results are presented in a straightforward way, with detailed returns and sometimes candid observations. The success of the Socialist party is made abundantly clear. One commentary notes that the Socialists, by joining with the Communists, would have a majority, but adds that they would have a still larger majority with the Popular Democrats. Communist leader Cunhal is quoted as saying that he "always thought" it desirable for the Socialists and Communists to work together.

The Soviet commentaries raise the possibility that the Soviets are not altogether displeased by the results. Moscow may calculate that the relative lack of electoral support for the Portuguese party will make it more amenable to Soviet influence. The Soviets are also likely to interpret the results as evidence of the wisdom of the PCP associating itself closely with the Armed Forces Movement, which remains the locus of power.

By presenting its home audience with this sober coverage of the elections, Moscow could be guarding against inflated expectations should developments turn out badly for the Portuguese Communists and the Soviet Union.

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Pressure Increases on Czechoslovak Dissidents

Increased harassment of supporters of Alexander Dubcek has led to fear within the Czechoslovak intellectual community that a wave of new repression is imminent.

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During the past week, according to [redacted] the US embassy, police conducted intensive searches in the homes of at least 16 Czechoslovak dissidents. The searches evidently follow rumors late last week of the arrest of four dissidents.

[redacted] two of those whose homes were searched were taken in for interrogation. Although no explicit threats of trials were made during the questioning, the police referred ominously to those sections of the penal code dealing with "subversion" and "incitement." The searches uncovered large amounts of illicit material that could be used as trial evidence against the dissidents or against Dubcek himself.

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The police action appears aimed in part at ferreting out the route by which the "Dubcek letter" and other illegal publications were sent abroad. The regime may hope that the developing threat of punitive measures will increase pressure on Dubcek to take the emigration option offered by party chief Husak in mid-April. In defiance, Ludvik Vaculik--one of Czechoslovakia's most prominent dissident authors--has evidently already sent a letter to the Western press publicizing the searches.

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The embassy has reported other signs of tightening security. These include more police on the street at times, increased surveillance of all embassy personnel, and more interrogations of Czechs and Slovaks who are in touch with foreigners. [redacted]

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Amnesty International Under the Gun

The arrests and harassment since mid-April of several prominent dissidents, all active in the small, semi-legal Moscow chapter of Amnesty International, is the latest evidence of the crackdown on dissidents in general, but especially those who embarrass Moscow or tar the Soviet image abroad.

The apparently coordinated action against the Amnesty International chapter may partly flow from the regime's concern that prominent dissidents might use their affiliation with the international human rights organization as a shield for their activities within the USSR, something it will not tolerate. Getting this message across to the West may have been the reason that the regime informed several major Western news agencies of the arrest of Andrey Tverdokhlebov, the chapter's secretary and former associate of dissident spokesman Andrey Sakharov on the Committee for Human Rights. The information on the arrest, which made no mention of Amnesty International, was sent by telex purportedly by the Novosti news agency. This is the first known time that the Soviets have, in effect, issued a press release on anti-dissident action.

The Moscow chapter of Amnesty International was recognized by the London-based headquarters last September, and reportedly held its first formal meeting in March. According to the chapter's chairman, Valentin Turchin--whose apartment was searched and who expects to be arrested soon--the group had deliberately avoided espousing the cause of Soviet political prisoners. Instead, he said, it had started a letter-writing effort on behalf of prisoners in Spain, Yugoslavia, and Sri Lanka. One Soviet source speculated that this pointed inattention to domestic political prisoners may have been viewed by the regime as a calculated sarcasm, while the positive moves were seen as meddling in foreign policy.

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[REDACTED]

Another reason for the action against the group could be the sponsorship by Amnesty International of a meeting in Geneva last week devoted to the abuse of psychiatry in the USSR. The conclave took place amid renewed attention in the Western press to the Soviet practice of incarcerating dissidents in mental hospitals. The charge of "disseminating anti-Soviet slander" levied against Tverdokhlebov strongly suggests that the regime suspects him and others of supplying Amnesty International and Western correspondents with much of the incriminating material.

A Moscow English-language broadcast to North America on April 23 denied any abuse of psychiatry in the Soviet Union, citing as proof the laudatory comments of a group of Western psychiatrists who toured Soviet mental hospitals last October. The next day, Tass took a more strident tack, charging that Amnesty International's meeting in Geneva served "reactionary bourgeois and Zionist interests" and that it was a platform enabling "renegade emigrants" to slander the USSR.

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[REDACTED]

[REDACTED] Sakharov and another prominent dissident spokesman, Igor Shafarevich, have already penned an appeal to world opinion on behalf of the Amnesty International activists, setting the regime's action against them in the context of the general crackdown on dissidents. Their sharply worded appeal suggests that if the regime is using Tverdohklebov's arrest to try to intimidate Sakharov, it will be disappointed.

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Polish Journalists Informed
About Administrative Reorganizations

Party leader Gierek last Friday revealed the regime's plans for a sweeping administrative-territorial reorganization of the country to a select group of senior editors and journalists

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Published accounts of the session only hinted at the magnitude of the changes. The details will be presented first at a Central Committee plenum, reportedly scheduled for May 12, and later at a session of parliament that will enact the requisite legislation.

Implementation, originally scheduled for the fall, has reportedly been advanced to June 1. One journalist commented that this may be a result of the apparent general acceptance of the reforms among important members of the intelligentsia who had been made privy to the planning. Warsaw may also want to prevent the crystalization of opposition.

Gierek told the journalists that the reorganization would lead to greater efficiency and better management of local government and would bring the bureaucracy closer to the people. The redistricting will also allow Gierek to replace corrupt, recalcitrant and unqualified officials at the powerful middle level of administration.

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The impending changes constitute a major structural reform, not only for the governmental but also for the party apparatus. It will take time to work out new sets of relationships. Gierek must believe, however, that the future of his plans for Poland's economic development--and possibly his own tenure--require such radical maneuvers.

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Grechko the Innovator?

The US defense attache in Moscow has perceptively pointed out that there was a highly unusual, perhaps even seminal paragraph in Minister of Defense Grechko's speech on April 18 closing a two day "scientific" conference on the 30th anniversary of the "Great Patriotic War." The text of that speech which was carried in *Red Star* is now available in Washington. Except for the paragraph in question, and Grechko's attempt to redress the damage he did to Soviet-Yugoslav relations in an earlier 30th anniversary statement belittling the Yugoslav war effort, the April 18 speech is a standard paean to the Soviet armed forces and to the Communist party's and the Soviet people's victory over fascist aggression. The paragraph, which follows a reference to the foundation of the Communist "community" and the Warsaw Pact (whose 20th anniversary, Grechko reminds a doubtlessly breathless audience, will be celebrated on May 14) reads:

Soviet people assess at its worth the contribution made to the general victory over the enemy by the peoples and armed forces of the states of the anti-Hitler coalition. The combat alliances of the USSR and the United States, Britain, France, and other capitalist countries which pooled their efforts to defeat the aggressor, graphically confirmed the possibility of effective political and military cooperation between states with different social systems. Under present day conditions the correct assessment of the experience of this cooperation and the extraction of useful lessons from it are of very great significance.

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Grechko's reference to "political and military cooperation" is, as far as we can tell, without precedent. CIA's data-scanning system could turn up only one other reference to military cooperation with the West, this by Premier Kosygin in a speech in July 1965. But Kosygin was referring only to the World War II experience and was making the point that there were people in the US who sought to "relegate to limbo that military cooperation" as well as the decisive contribution of the USSR to the victory over fascism. Grechko, in contrast, indicates that the cooperation of 30 years ago has relevance for today. He does not, however, go on to tell his audience what the "correct assessment" of the World War II cooperation should be, nor what "useful lessons" can be derived. The short paragraph that follows asserts, tantalizingly;

History teaches us that ensuring collective security and consolidation (sic) peace is the business of all freedom-loving people.

Does Grechko mean to suggest that military cooperation between the US and the USSR would, in the 1970s, ensure collective security and peace? And what, specifically, does he have in mind if he is talking about military cooperation in the 1970s? Arms limitations reductions? He does not mention them in the text; indeed, he refers, as might be expected from a defense minister, to the intensification of NATO's military preparations and goes on to assert that the socialist states must do everything necessary to strengthen their defensive might. Moreover, if Grechko meant to suggest that military cooperation with the West would be a good thing, he also wants to make it clear that it is not because of any weakness in the Soviet Union or the Socialist states. He states that the "main lesson" of World War II is the "invincibility of socialism and its military organization." But there is "another important

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lesson": that the war posed "very keenly" the question of preventing an even bloodier war, and out of this concern came the "general line" of Soviet foreign policy. This line has achieved "advances," but it has not yet altered the aggressive nature of imperialism.

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